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INTERACTION BETWEEN CULTURE AND ECONOMY IN TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT VILLAGES IN VIETNAM

According to earlier beliefs, referring to the interaction between culture and economy, many people often emphasize the impact of economy on culture and disregard contrariwise, limiting it to certain aspects only, such as dialectics. In fact, economy and culture strongly and truly interact with each other, and it is difficult to define what interaction direction is stronger or more important.

For more details, we carried out a survey in 7 traditional handicraft villages in northern Vietnam. In addition to observation and data collection, we had 22 interviews with local managers, the chairman of handicraft sub-association, artisans and other villagers. We also prepared 3 different questionnaires for villagers, artisans and businessmen respectively.

The achieved results show that:

1. Impacts of culture to economic development of traditional handicraft villages

In traditional handicraft villages, culture has made both positive and negative effects on economy, shown through the following expressions:

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1.1. Positive impacts

Contributing to formation of economic mindset

In the traditional handicraft village, the economy is still self-sufficient, the market economy just begins to develop. Therefore, the people here almost have no economic thinking; market and its governing to the production is very strange to hear. Therefore, in the transition to the market economy, difficulties in products consumption have made great challenges to villages, weakening many villages or even making some disappear.

However, Vietnamese people are famous for never giving themselves up before any situation and any difficulties. Furthermore, the thinking of considering themselves a part of nature help Vietnamese people a flexible mindset, easy to adapt to any circumstances. The thinking of “adapt and survive” strengthens villagers never to surrender to any difficulties. They did a lot of tests and experiments and their diligence and patience did not make them discouraged with failures. Eventually, they managed to find out adaptation methods in simple ways.

In our survey conducted in La Xuyen wood village, when asked about the efforts of residents in maintaining traditional handicraft, the chairman of Yen Ninh Commune said:

...We have to approach market, go to many province of Hai Phong, Hanoi, Quang Ninh, or Thai Nguyen, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An ... even to built sales locations in Thai Nguyen, Ha Tay. It naturally makes people dynamic, as they make products, and they must think the way to sell their products and also make products promotion (Interview with Mr. Ninh Khac Thang, chairman of Yen Ninh commune, Y Yen district, Nam Dinh province).

Thus, in order to survive, manufacturers in traditional handicraft villages have to explore markets, adjust production scale and products design as required by markets. All these things help them know to listening to the market, grasp market need to adjust their business operations. Many primary market researches, marketing have been made.

Sociological survey by Do Thien Kinh in 1997 also showed the same result: “When asked about the cause of well-being, a resident in Red River Delta answered as follows: capital: 76.8%; business know-how-to: 75.3%; extra jobs: 78.5%” (Dao Nga My 2000; 60).

In the above reasons, “business know-how-to” plays as a cultural factor. Flexible and quick thinking helps people approach new business ways and reach achievements. Economic thinking has been formed and realized production and business practice and leads to success.

Also in this survey: Answering the question “Why do many households in commune develop handicraft and become wealthy?” people in Da Ton commune suggested that the key is dare to think, dare to do with know-how-to; and capital and tech-

nology. As leaders in Vu Hoi commune confirmed: with innovation mechanism nowadays, handicraft development is basically due to the activeness of households. Local authority always supports, encourages and facilitates households to develop economy, to enrich; but working sector and, business methods are on the sole determination of households (Dao Nga My 2000; 60).

Traditional handicraft villages' behavior is considerably affected by economic thinking. In stead of considering visitors as passers-by and paying attention to their work, currently they are aware of manufacturing products which satisfy all demands of potential clients. It is visible to see the appearance of souvenir shop at every traditional handicraft village. In some places, the artisans are ready to show their original items. In the recent years, when visiting Bat Trang pottery village, the tourists shall stand opportunities to visit manufacture facilities and participate in any step during manufacture process. The pottery molding and painting are always a exciting game attracting both Vietnamese and foreign visitors.

Encouraging the initiatives of difficulties overcome

Also thanks to the economic thinking in the market economy, workers are getting more and more proactive when dealing with difficulties. They become more flexible and smarter. And quite a few people have succeeded.

Dong Ho folk painting village, after a long time failing to deal with rigors of the market economy, has almost extincted, leaving only two households remaining production. To gain the win in the cruel elimination of market, household of artisan Nguyen Dang Che has made strong and innovative ideas: On the one hand, he approached far provinces, even in the South, to expand the market. His son, Nguyen Dang Tam said that he often brought Dong Ho painting to both domestic and international fairs, peak year of 11 fairs. On the other hand, his family also actively collaborated with many tourism companies, schools, opened painting service for tourists. On peak days, painting workshop of his family served up to 500 students making painting printing (Interview with Mr. Nguyen Dang Tam, artisan Nguyen Dang Che's son, Dong Ho folk painting village).

By these ways, artisan Nguyen Dang Che family not only retains their profession, production, but also expands scale and brings new services to serve tourists. It can be said that his family is an admirable example of the activeness to overcome difficulties and get success. And that's just one of various typical examples of traditional handicraft villages in the market economy.

Mr. Ha Van Lai, an artisan in Van Quan scent incense-making village, Thai Binh province is also a typical example for difficulty overcome:



Photo 1. The picture of a pig drawn in the scallop paper (the body of the pig is covered by scallop [scallop is a type of mussel with brilliant shell] with sparkling white) – a artistic work of the artisan Nguyen Huu Sam in Dong Ho folk painting village (Photo by Dinh Thi Van Chi)

Different from the others who leave their countryside to cities for new jobs, he spent a lot of time in learning effective scent incense making model in locality. Then, he dared to borrow to establish a manufacture facility. For the first time, due to lack of experience, his business has to face difficulties and losses. However, he tried to accumulate professional knowledge, invest further into machinery, research market's demands, introduce his owned products to other villages. At present, the success came to him. In addition to owning 3 production facilities, he contributed to create good employment to 7-10 workers with stable income¹.

Stimulating the creativity

Flexible and adaptable conduct creates creativity in production for workers in traditional handicraft villages. Many people have researched and worked hard to achieve remarkable results. For example, the artisan Nguyen Huu Vui in Dong Xam silver village has created durable metal casting molds instead of earth molds, thus quality products are improved better. Or the artisan Vu Thanh Luan in Van Lam embroidery village has invented the sensor pen for embroidery by attaching a small electric motor to the pen. When design, the sensor pen can assign design positioning and placement quickly and uniformly with a uniform smooth and nice strokes. His technology has been widely applied in the village, helped create nice designs with higher production and more beautiful by-hand design. Moreover, he also worked hard to create new kinds of fabrics to express embroidery patterns:

¹ A young man dreaming of development of traditional handicraft as scent incense making., The official portal of Youth Union of Hung Ha district dated 12.01.2015, <http://huyendoanhungha.vn/index.php/vi/news/Guong-sang-tuoi-tre/Chang-thanh-nien-voi-uoc-mo-phat-trien-lang-nghe-lam-huong-truyen-thong-375/>.

I think of a new kind of fabric. At the beginning, it was so hard. I had to go to the industrial textile factory to meet the director, Mr Hoang Tung Nguyen. He supported my idea immediately and produced 3000 meters. Bring home and trying and it was very good. Villagers sold such product with 300,000 dong in 1995 (Interview with Mr. Vu Thanh Luan, Chairman of the Committee of Van Lam embroidery Village, Ninh Hai Commune, Hoa Lu district, Ninh Binh).

As in Bat Trang pottery village, Fomex Company (joint venture with Denmark) invested a new kind of clay replacing to clay imported from the UK with the cost of only 1/10; The company also created, produced unique potteries such as lacquer pottery, mother of pearl inlaid pottery, pottery with wood, and pottery with copper...

Thanks to knowledge equipped during training time in University of Industrial Fine Art, the artisan Vu Duc Thang has promoted his creativeness to carry out well floating mold technique and carve patterns on the pottery (hidden design) which up to



Photo 2. Pottery with wood of Fomex company, Bat Trang pottery Village
(Photo by Dinh Thi Van Chi)



Photo 3. A pottery vase created by hidden design of the artisan Vu Duc Thang, Bat Trang pottery village
(Photo by Dinh Thi Van Chi)

now become Vu Duc Thang's sole know-how. Creating a sophisticated floating pattern is really a big challenge to every handicraft-man because they sometime have to spend a month to finish a this design in scale of several centimeters. Moreover, in order to ensure quality, preserve delicacy of the pattern and create a soul for the product, it is necessary to possess skillful ceramic firing technique. And many other artists with similar inventions.

Enhancing the awareness of responsibility to the community

In Vietnamese culture, human beings plays a crucial role in community, so villagers always have a sense of community. The common thing with common benefits, and as their wishes, they will join hands: “At the time of building the temple without money from state budget, the chairman of ward donated several billion for temple construction. Residents’ donation: This person donated something, the other gave other thing... Those donation created the development like this“ (Interview with Mr. Do Van Soan, the guardian of Van Phuc traditional craft temple). Similarly, in La Xuyen wood village: “All festivals are funded by villagers, not from commune’s budget” (Interview with Mr. Ninh Khac Thang, chairman of Yen Ninh commune, Y Yen district, Nam Dinh province). In Van Phuc silk village:

For example of two textile machines in the temple [...] I invite entire good technicians to come. All of them gave donation. Everyone in village also gave money until enough money for these two machines. Only wood cost tens of millions, wholly ironwood [...] But many people and organizations, when I said about payment, they chased me away (Interview with Mr. Do Van Soan, the guardian of Van Phuc traditional craft temple).

Larger enterprises contributes more money. Hence, many public buildings and infrastructure items in villages have been built. For example, in La Xuyen wood village: “This front road was fully funded by companies, for example, it took 2 billion in estimation, households surrounding industrial zone contributed money, the commune also support some money...” (Interview with Mr. Ninh Khac Thang, the chairman of Yen Ninh commune, Y Yen district, Nam Dinh province). And in Van Lam embroidery village, every family owns a boat registered with the Ward People’s committee to transport visitors exploring Tam Coc-Bich Dong. When the local authority needs to mobilize funds from people, it will base on boat number to call for people for contribution (Interview with Mr. Bui Xuan Thuy – Deputy Chairman of Ninh Hai Commune, Ninh Binh province). Thanks to these consents, various hard work could be done.

The results of our questionnaire also showed that, when asked about the willingness to contribute to their villages, villagers answered as follows (see Fig. 1).

All of villagers, artisans and businessmen are willing to contribute their force and materials to development of their living place with the rate of 65,5%-41,4%; 53,6%-69,6% and 79,8% - 67% respectively. Such figures are at high level.

Clearly, a responsible lifestyle has been formed and positively encouraged villagers, making them ready to join hands in common task of the village.

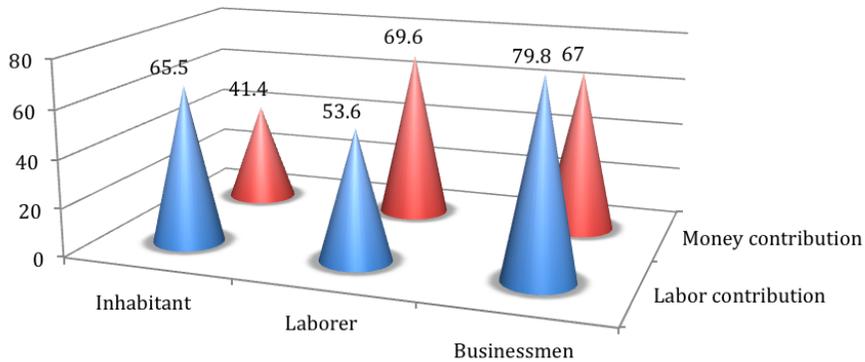


Figure 1. The willingness of villagers to contribute to develop villages (Unit: %)
 Source: Dinh Thi Van Chi, survey on traditional handicraft villages

Bringing the economic benefits

Culture brings many enormous economic benefits as it is considered humane resources and included in tourism service.

Currently, aware of this, many region with traditional handicraft villages have invested in villages development aiming at attracting tourists. For example:

Bac Giang Department of Industry and Trade has approved the “Planning for the development of industrial and small industry & handicrafts villages” in the province to support traditional handicraft villages in national fairs; to organize profession performance programs, and to introduce products ... to promote visitors, tourism and shopping. Similarly, the project “Development of production of handicraft products and craft village tours in Quang Nam” builds brand of “Crafted in Quang Nam” and promotes village tours in the province. Thus, visitors to villages increased significantly, 100 thousand in estimation in 2013; in which international visitors accounted for about 90%. Only 7 handicraft facilities associated with village tourism development in province bring nearly 200 billion of revenue annually, accounting for 10% of total revenue of all traditional handicraft villages around the province (Quang Nam restores traditional... 2014).

A research carried out by a lecturer group of Can Tho University showed that:

The combination between traditional handicraft villages in Hau Giang province and tourism shall create a highly economic value. For example, in 2013 the revenue of 204,154,260 Vietnamese dong is a great contribution of tourists to the mat weaving village. In the same year, boat building village can earn 161,736.32 Vietnamese dong from the such resource (Nguyen Tri Nam Khang, Mai Van Nam and Duong Que Nhu 2013; 17-25).

And:

Hanoi Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism has also developed villages tours with destinations including Van Phuc silk village, Bat Trang pottery village, Phu Vinh bamboo and rattan village (Chuong My District), Quat Dong embroidery village (Thuong Tin District), Chuon Ngo mother of-pearl inlaying village (Phu Xuyen district)... Some of these traditional villages have become famous tourism destinations such as Bat Trang, Van Phuc... In Bat Trang village, according to the People's Committee of Bat Trang commune, there are more than 60,000 tourists, both domestic and foreign traveling here annually with pottery purchase expenses of over 200 billion (Hanoi has still struggled... 2013).

Although village tourism still has many limitation to overcome, but it is undeniable that cultural values of traditional handicraft villages are becoming factors attracting visitors, bringing economic benefits to villagers.



Photo 4. Paintings and bronzed painting frames made by artisan Nguyen Huu Vu, Dong Xam silver village (Photo by Dinh Thi Van Chi)

1.2. Negative impacts

Besides above-mentioned positive impacts, some outdated practices and customs in Vietnamese peasant culture also makes negative impacts on economic development of traditional handicraft villages with details as follows:

Maintaining and encouraging peasant business style

Farmers are used to working and producing in small scale, small labor force, small funds, and get small income... so they are also used to petty things; and cannot imagine great matters with strategic vision. They are happy with small profit and feel upset with small loss. So they always regard and purchase visible and temporary things.

Craftsmen may appropriate part of the materials when making customer's products, use lower quality materials, cutting processing section for lower costs but also still sell at price of qualified goods. The motivation of these action is that they can get additional little profit. For example, a carpenter in La Xuyen wood village said:

If the customer has no idea of wood but just feels beauty and satisfaction, workers also needn't to make all details with qualified wood. They can make some details with other wood but do not affect the product. For example, dalbergia cochinchinesis and mahogany with different prices, some placements make no impact on products for 5-10 year (Interview with Hien Oanh business owner, La Xuyen wood village, Y Yen district, Nam Dinh).

Not only workers but also local officers know these "tricks":

If the customer only requires to make one piece of furniture with a sum of money, it can still be finished. But the problem is what type of wood? Wood costs 10 million/block. But there are also type of wood with hundreds of millions per block, unless we know, they will exchange fraudulently our goods (Interview with Mr. Ninh Khac Thang, chairman of Yen Ninh commune, Y Yen, Nam Dinh).

That is, workers still cheat, managers still know, but they seem to see it a common matter, and no need to worry about, so everything is still accepted. It's dishonest business way dominated by peasant psychology, chasing small benefit but not thinking in the future, and the long-term growth and reputation of their factories well as of their villages.

Encouraging unhealthy competition

In addition to peasant psychology, there is also a fact affecting villagers, creating unhealthy competition between them. For example:

China makes use of Vietnamese bamboo materials to produce handicraft products then exports back to Vietnam. As for bamboo toothpick, in 2010, Chinese goods imported into Vietnam reached a record of 1,118 tons (excluding the amount of quota toothpick through the border) (China makes use of Vietnamese bamboo 2015).

However, there is no toothpick package labeling China, but Vietnam. That means, there are some domestic operations selling Chinese toothpick labeled Vietnam and sell at higher price than product labeled China.

Nevertheless, mostly Vietnamese handicraft products do not have own brand, so this operation can easily “steal” designs of other operation to print marketing catalog. According to the artisan Dao Van Boi (Van Ha wood village), when his operation launched a product, only after a few days products with similar design also appeared on the market. Similarly, when asked why operations in the village did not create a website to introduce your products, Mr Nguyen Van Sinh, the chairman of Van Phuc silk village committee said, “Introducing our designs on the Website only enables others to ‘steal’”. And in fact it has happened to many operations.

With the freedom to copy designs of handicraft products like that, many commercial companies just do a business of collecting samples and then ordering for their production. Obviously, it is unfair competition, stealing other’s effort, but they cannot be convicted because models are not registered copyright.

There are different types of competition, also unfair, but public: Some craftsmen of Bat Trang pottery village are trading pottery items that carry style of Phu Lang pottery. They buy clay from Phu Lang, hire workers from Phu Lang to make Phu Lang-style products. But they say that these product are made in Bat Trang and sell them at 3 to 4 times higher price than those of Phu Lang.

Contributing to the formation of “makeshift” production and business

With deep peasant psychology, a lot of people in handicraft villages have unintentionally (and intentionally) exchanged their long-standing trademarks for mediocre and small benefits. In villages like Bat Trang, Van Phuc, villagers have mixed Chinese goods with village’s products for bigger consumption.

In 2011, the total consumed silk of Van Phuc were around 2 million meters, only making up 1/3 compared to the consumption of 3 years ago. Because Van Phuc silk shops now mostly sell mass-produced goods, old and monotonous models without label, or only a label of “100%

pashmina” (if any). There is few product with stamped brand. Mr. Hung (making and trading high-grade silk here) said: Up to 70% of silk shops in Van Phuc sell mixed silk, 100% of shops sell Chinese silk, nylon silk (70% silk sold in Van Phuc village... 2015).

But all shop owners try to confirm with customers that they sell Van Phuc silk, seriously affecting brand and reputation of the village.

Although aware of shortcomings, the chairman of Van Phuc village committee has shown his contradiction when he himself also agreed with business trend of profit pursuing but ignoring long-term interests of villagers. He defended that:

“Villagers find profits and they do it,” and also explained that: “If they only sell products made in village, then shops cannot attract customers. If customers wish to purchase orthodox products, products are also available to be served. And if they do not want to buy authentic products, but low-quality ones, it is still OK” (Interview with Mr. Nguyen Van Sinh, Chairman of Van Phuc village Committee).

This explanation is actually a fallacy, breach of trust with traditional craft. It does not show yearn of career maintaining of a dedicated craftsmen. Also in this interview, when asked about the potential loss of business brand if keep doing “makeshift” business like that, Mr. Sinh said he just fears career loss, job loss, but not fear brand loss. It is difficult to know that how long Van Phuc villagers will attach to this craft, if hundreds of shops here continue selling low-quality silk as Mr. Sinh said and he, a person also contributes to trade them?

In Bat Trang, although local government do not defend for this strick, but they have still not given solution for this problem. According to the Secretary cum Chairman of the commune, the commune are taking propaganda to the villagers:

We also spread propaganda. Although we cannot ban household from trading, we specify clearly. For examples, goods from other regions must be clearly stated: Quang Ninh pottery, Phu Lang pottery, ceramic Hai Duong ceramic... and also Chinese products for customers to make comparison. They must not be mixed, Chinese goods must not be branded with Bat Trang (Interview with Mr. Dao Xuan Hung, Secretary cum Chairman of the Bat Trang commune).

It is this production and business way that has been killing many traditional handicraft villages. According to Mr Luu Duy Dan, Chairman of Vietnam Association of Craft Village: “I have to say that you (Van Phuc village) have been killing silk. First, there is no new design, while Chinese products can be found everywhere. Second, that Chinese silk labeled Van Phuc silk is unacceptable. Bat Trang now is in the same situation. I also told Bat Trang like that” (Interview with Mr. Luu Duy Dan, Chairman of Vietnam Association of Craft Villages).

2. Impacts of economy on cultural development in traditional handicraft village

2.1. Positive impacts

Facilitating cultural creation

When village grows and develops, leading to the economic growth, improved income, affluent life, and people will be happier. Positive psychology makes them easy to arise ideas and artistic creativity. Rich folk culture treasure that we possess nowadays is the product of innovation and creation refined from many generations of peasants.

Traditional handicraft brings high income (compared to agriculture), and plays a role as a positive factor promoting the development of folk culture, making healthy life of the village, giving people diversified spiritual life.

Many handicraft villages, in addition to cultural activities as in other Vietnamese villages, often hold handicraft festivals. This is an occasion for villagers to be directly involved in the general activities of the village. They themselves build scenario, organize and play roles in cultural activities in these festivals.

Moreover, with economic growth, traditional handicraft villages can create favorable conditions for the education children in villages. For example:

Thuong Tin district includes lots of famous craft villages such as wood turning in Nhi Khe lacquer in Duyen Thai, embroidery in Quat Dong “day” cake making in Quan Ganh... Thuong Tin is also famous for the top competition-examination results (approximately 70 people) through many feudal dynasties. Many families typically Vu family in Ba Lang Village, Dung Tien Commune have many people passing doctoral examination. Family “Tu” in Khe Hoi village, Ha Hoi commune is called “PhD family” because there are many people passing doctoral examinations Typically, the family Nguyen Phi Khanh in Nhi Khe Village, both father and son passed doctoral examination in 1400. Later there was Nguyen Trai who was excellent at both literature and martial arts made great contribution to help the King Le Loi defeated Chinese Ming enemy (Wikipedia. Thuong Tin 2015).

Or:

Da Sy village is also famous for many people passing doctoral examinations. The name “Da Sy” itself means a land with many doctors, because the village with less than 3,000 people of population contributes 11 doctors and 1 Doctoral Laureate. Prominent among them is Dr. Hoang Trinh Thanh, who set up the only “Learning Garden” in our country under the Le Dynasty; the Doctoral Laureate Hoang Nghia Phu with the petition to the king. There is also the famous physician Hoang Don Hoa who was honored as “Great physician” under Le Dynasty and be grateful for his 208 remedies, he is considered the ancestor of Vietnamese army medical (Wikipedia. Thuong Tin 2015).

Similarly,

Dong Ngac village is not only famous for some traditional crafts such as “nem” making, carrying pole making, clay pot shaping ... but also known as the “doctor village” because there are so many doctors. Bat Trang Village have 1 poinsettias, 3 Dukes, 9 Doctors, 364 people passing examinations (Wikipedia. Bat Trang 2015)

and other sacred lands with extraordinary people. It can be said that handicraft villages is the cradle of fostering learning fondness for ancient students.

Today, learning fondness tradition still remains in many villages. And one of reasons is that traditional handicraft villages has built a solid economic foundation to support students’ learning as well as makes them focus on learning.

Enriching spiritual cultural activities

As noted, traditional handicraft villages usually hold craft festivals annually. These festivals are prepared and organized by villagers from scenario preparation, banquet making to cultural activities and entertainment organizing. The festivals are organized in either big or small scale depending on the capability of each village: If a village develops with prosperous life, the festival will be organized in big scale, both to celebrate the success; and to express their deep gratitude to the ancestor. Moreover, with success in operations, businesses have conditions to fund the festival. For example, Tong Xa bronze casting village (Nam Dinh province), organized a huge festival in 2008 with fireworks and invited some central performing art to come the village. The entire budget for this festival comes from some well-being businesses in village.

Additionally, when people’s life better improves, as people usually say that “honours change manners”, more cultural activities will be held and held in large scale. In our survey, according to comments of handicraft villagers, mostly spiritual cultural activities in villages have been held more compared to 10 years ago.

Most cultural activities are organized more than before according to villagers’ comments. Not only ancestor’s death anniversaries are organized (commented to increase by 47.4%), but also today many families have built their ancestral temples as an expression of their deep gratitude to their ancestors. There is also increasingly rise in the organizations of rituals associated with the life cycle as funerals, weddings, birthday, longevity congratulation... (respectively 87.9%, 85.3% and 80.2% of comments). Cultural activities organized in public cultural institutions such as stadiums, houses of culture, stadiums ...are also commented to increase, with around 60%. As activities held in restaurant and service locations increase up to 87.9%, consistent with the context of the market economy, because, nowadays many exchanges, parties with friends and part-

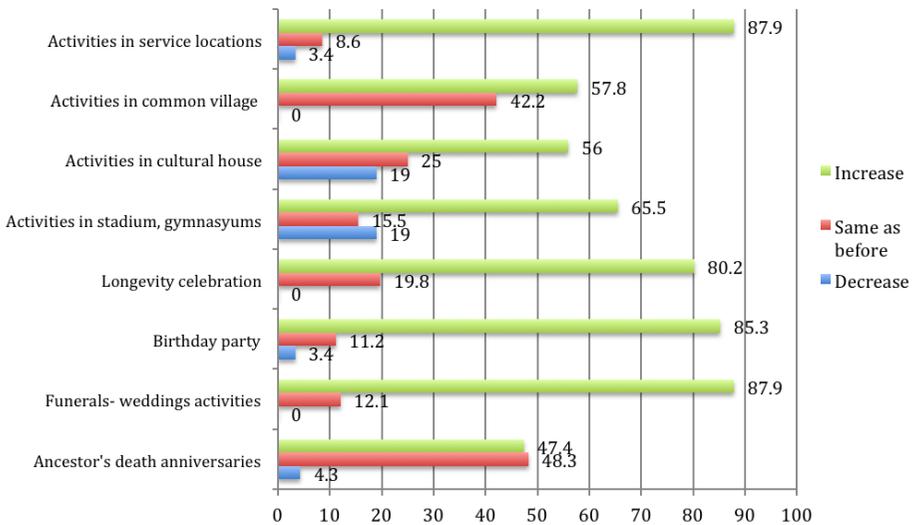


Figure 2. Reviews of villagers of frequency transformation of cultural activities in traditional handicraft villages (compared to 10 years ago) (Unit: %) Source: Dinh Thi Van Chi, survey on traditional handicraft villages

ners have been held in restaurant and service location. Many handicraft villages have become city, so these services relatively developed.

Contributing to make social life healthy

When the village grows and develops, creating stable jobs for people, ensuring sufficient income for life, people no longer have to find tricks to earn money. They become better, working and enriching legitimately. Nefarious deeds, negative actions and illegal behaviors will reduce as a result. It will create clean social environment and peaceful life. For example, in Bat Trang village: “Bat Trang are building the project of building a new countryside. Compared with 19 criteria of the new countryside, Bat Trang have only 18 criteria because there is no agriculture. Currently we have reached 10 criteria” (Interview with Mr. Dao Xuan Hung, Secretary cum Chairman of Bat Trang commune). Or in Yen Ninh wood village:

Agencies and organizations still work, and reconcile, make all village’s business of funerals, weddings, then also make rules, agreements of building cultural village. There are 4 hamlets and all of them are recognized as cultural villages. In cultural village, there are some agreements made such as funerals, weddings, festivals, transport, culture, kindergarten, preschool ... all of them have their own rules called under the law (Interview Mr. Ninh Khac Thang, chairman of Yen Ninh commune, Y Yen, Nam Dinh).

These rules and regulations are institutionalized, managed by the government authorities, have made great contribution to ensuring security and building harmonious life for villagers.

Economic growth of traditional villages bring the well-being to villages and the richness of cultural spiritual activities. Villagers' demand for cultural activities of people are also satisfied: For instance, Van Phuc silk village have completed six houses of culture, places for meetings, community activities, playing sports and organizing political and cultural events. Van Phuc also finished the temple of Uncle Ho, where places not only Uncle Ho statue but also stone stele naming 142 heroic martyrs of the village. And

when Tet comes, he (the chairmen of commune) contribute several million dong to buy chung cakes as offerings to worship the martyrs. Villagers brings chung cakes to here, seeing that and do not have to worry anymore (Interview Mr. Do Van Soan, the guardian of Van Phuc traditional craft temple).

With such dedicated people for the commune and traditional handicraft villages, the village not only develops, but also people life will be better with healthier environment and society as well as peaceful spiritual life. The negative social evils will thus minimize.

For example, in Phu Nghia bamboo and rattan village, with 2374 household with 10018 inhabitants, but only 4 are addicted to drugs. For many years Phu Nghia is always selected as a pure commune free from drug of Chuong My District, Ha Noi (Bach Thi Lan Anh 2010; 10).

It will reduce unnecessary things like children dropping out of school to earn money, youths displacing villages to find jobs in cities...

A study by the author Bach Thi Lan Anh in 2009 of the situation of children dropout of school in some traditional village shows small ratio:

- In Huong Canh pottery (Vinh Phuc): 8% of children drop out of school
- In Minh Tan wood village (Vinh Phuc): 5%
- In Thanh Lang wood village (Vinh Phuc): 0%
- In Dong Giao mother of pearl inlaying village (Vinh Phuc): 0%
- In Quynh Xa metal village (Hanoi): 0%
- In Ha Thai lacquer village (Hanoi): 5-6% (Bach Thi Lan Anh 2010; 114).

Focusing on economic aspects (efficiency, benefits) of culture

Previously, the culture is considered a non-profit sector, not only fails to bring benefits to the society, but even requires cost. Therefore, in a long time, the culture had been ignored from development plan making. Nowadays, together with social development, spiritual cultural life of people has improved, needs for cultural activities also increases, and the culture becomes a resource that can bring profits. More and more culture

and entertainment companies have mushroomed. Culture industry with large profits is referred as well as famous artists with huge income. Besides, the culture becomes a humane resource for tourism development.

Aware of roles of cultural factors, handicraft villages are making their best attempts to attract visitors to both tangible and intangible heritages in their village: Van Phuc Village repairs the temple, restores the ancestral temple, plans textile machinery exhibition area and shows silk production process to serve visitors. Bat Trang village really becomes a tourism village with unique buffalo-cart traveling service; pottery shaping playgrounds appear everywhere. The pottery shaping process now is not merely a production process for workers but becomes entertainment for tourists. Similarly, Dong Ho folk painting village has also actively explored painting printing services to serve tourists who want to learn and make a painting in the form of village.

It can be seen, cultural factors are paid special attention to by villages and put into tours. Diverse cultural services are increasingly appearing in villages to serve tourists. A new mindset, focusing on economic aspects of the culture, has been formed in villagers.

2.2. Negative impacts

Creating psychology of foreign preference, traditional values disregarding

As a small country with developing economy, people life remains many difficulties, so many Vietnamese people have psychology of low self-esteem. When exposing to foreign goods, foreign style, living abroad, especially in developed countries, many Vietnamese people feel strange, excited, and admire, even revere it. Since then, the psychology of foreign preference is formed, they consider everything from foreign better and more beautiful than those of Vietnam.

With products that Vietnam have not yet produced or produced with not high quality, the psychology of foreign preference is acceptable. But lots of products made in Vietnam with high quality, adored by foreigners, but are underestimated by Vietnamese people compared to foreign goods with same category: For example, in spite of Vietnamese dairy with high quality, ensuring food safety with lower cost, many Vietnamese mothers still try to seek imported milk for their children, although a fact that many imported milk with toxins can kill children. Although Vietnamese candy are delicious and have good taste, when using candy for offering, many people still buy candy boxes with foreign labels, whether they are manufactured in countries like Argentina, Indonesia, India ... where technology and quality maybe inferior to domestic ones. Vietnamese leather and garments have high quality and preferred by foreigners when being exported, even many countries also slander Vietnam of dumping and

sue Vietnam to prevent Vietnamese goods from entering and competing with their products. Meanwhile, in Vietnam, these items are less interested by Vietnamese people.

Many high-quality goods are neglected due to psychology of foreign preference, the items from traditional handicraft villages with not high quality, not attractive designs will be neglected by consumers due to this psychology.

Thinking highly of modern job, disregard traditional craft of village

Among reasons for the degradation of traditional handicraft villages, the indifference to the tradition is a major factor. Survey results of our questionnaire showed that villagers today no longer focus on their traditional occupations but tend to find other job.

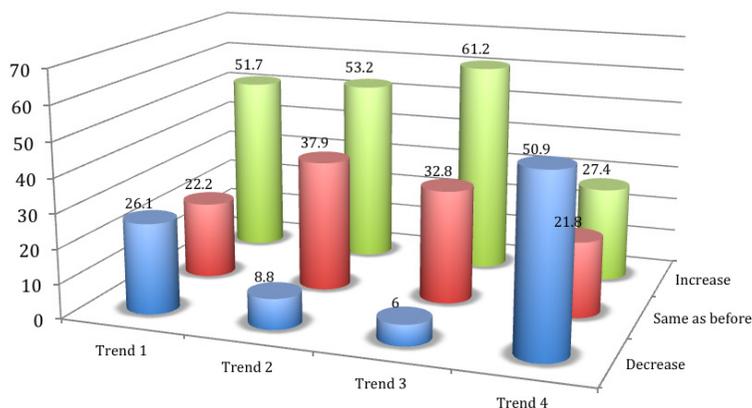


Figure 3. Career desire of handicraft villagers (Unit: %). Source: Dinh Thi Van Chi, survey on traditional handicraft villages

In which:

Trend 1: Short-term vocational training with immediate employment and income,

Trend 2: Long-time vocational training with higher income,

Trend 3: Long-time vocational training, cushy job,

Trend 4: Traditional crafts.

The graph shows that 61.2% of villagers suggest cushy job is selected more than ever before, followed by high-income job (53.2%) and work with immediate employment and income (51.7%). And 50.9% people said that fewer people selecting traditional craft; 21.8% said that it has been selected as before; only 27.4% said that more people choose it.

Many family were asked if they want to allow their children to follow the handicraft of the village, the answer “no” overwhelmed with 87.9% (Source: Dinh Thi Van Chi, survey on traditional handicraft village). This is true not only for local people, but also for artisans: A well-being owner in La Xuyen wood village shares us about his family preparation for the future of children: “Over recent years, many wealthy families have invested money for their children going to universities and then buy houses in Hanoi for their children. I also have a villa in Hanoi, but it is not equipped with furniture, just built” (Interviews with the owner of Hien Oanh operation, La Xuyen wood village, Y Yen, Nam Dinh). A skilled artisan in Dong Xam silver village also said: “Frankly, my family is a bit well-being, so we also want to invest more in children’s education. Seeking other jobs is better” (Interview with Mr. Hoang Van Hau, a skilled worker in Dong Xam silver village).

Reducing community cohesion in villages

In the production process in villages, conflicts may arise between production operations, businesses and villagers. These conflicts vary in content and level: conflict due to the scramble for customers, unfair competition, or due to environmental pollution caused by production operations and villagers who do not make craft but have to suffer consequences.

The study of “sense of community and environmental conflict in handicraft villages in Red River Delta” in 2005, showed: “There are conflicts between resident groups in village community, as the discontent with the polluters, sue to authorities and most seriously use force to each other. This attitude occurs to those who do not participate in the production” (Dang Dinh Long 2005, s. 78).

These conflicts negatively affect village relationships. Conduct model of “neighborly Support”, “better a neighbor near than a brother far off” now fails to play its role in adjusting people’s behavior and to help them closer as before. They hardly share with each other because of differences in interests and methods of living. The old conduct guideline of villages of “Reason is not as important as sentiment” is not suitable nowadays, because the “sentiment” has worn through contradictions, conflicts, words and even force. Living standards of “settle conflict with negotiation”, which is a typical character of simple farmers, but now is difficult to apply because they are difficult to harmony in such an environment.

Sometimes these conflicts become the conflict between handicraft village and village without craft, leading to the environmental conflicts between them. These potential risks may negatively affect their harmony, and community cohesion which is a prominent and precious feature of Vietnamese villages, and without adequately settled, these conflicts would threaten community solidarity in traditional handicraft villages.

* * *

Therefore, after conducting the surveys in traditional handicraft villages, we discovered that the culture and economy of traditional handicraft villages affect each other in both positive and negative ways. The positive effects of the culture contributed to the economic development of traditional handicraft village and brought great benefits to the villagers. However, its adverse impacts, including high evaluation of short-term advantages, become hidden risks for the market and trademark possessed by traditional villages.

In the same trend economy plays an important role in preparation of a solid financial and material source for cultural development. On the other hand, it also results in cultural commercialization and loss of many good values.

This complex interaction brings many positive changes and innovations towards inevitable trend of modern society to traditional handicraft villages. However, it also creates a difficult problem when it comes to promoting the positive and minimizing the negative.

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Interaction between culture and economy in traditional handicraft villages in Vietnam

Abstract: The research in traditional handicraft villages shows that economy and culture mutually interact in both positive and negative ways since culture is a human resource which not only brings economic benefits, but also strongly impacts the formation of economic mindset, stimulates creativity and enhances people's responsibility to the community. Additionally, Vietnamese small-scale peasant culture is a condition for arising bad practices of small business, reducing economic development. Economy acts as a material resource for cultural development, contributing to creating a healthy society. However, economy also pushes human into material race, creating psychology of external preferences, while disregarding cultural and traditional values and reducing community cohesion.

Keywords: interactions between culture and economy, mutual interactions between culture and economy, culture and economy of handicraft villages

Interakcje między kulturą a gospodarką w tradycyjnych wioskach rzemieślniczych w Wietnamie

Streszczenie: Badania dotyczące tradycyjnych wiosek rzemieślniczych pokazują, że gospodarka i kultura wzajemnie oddziałują na siebie zarówno w pozytywny, jak i negatywny sposób, jako że kultura powstaje z zasobów ludzkich, co nie tylko przynosi korzyści ekonomiczne, ale również silnie wpływa na powstawanie myślenia ekonomicznego, pobudza kreatywność i zwiększa poczucie odpowiedzialności społecznej. Jednakże prowadzona na niewielką skalę działalność kulturalna w wietnamskich wsiach przyczynia się do powstania niekorzystnych praktyk dotyczących małych przedsiębiorstw, wpływając na zmniejszenie rozwoju gospodarczego. Gospodarka działa jako źródło materialnego rozwoju kultury, przyczyniając się do stworzenia zdrowego społeczeństwa. Jednakże to właśnie gospodarka również popycha człowieka w kierunku rywalizacji materialnej, opartej na wartościach zewnętrznych, pomijając wartości kulturowe i tradycyjne oraz zmniejszając spójność społeczną.

Słowa kluczowe: interakcje między kulturą a gospodarką, wzajemne interakcje pomiędzy kulturą a gospodarką, kultura i gospodarka wsi trudniących się rękodzielnictwem